

# DESERT VOICE

November 16, 2005

Serving the U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait



Turn  
it up

Page 6&7

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# DESERT VOICE

Volume 27, Issue 17

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### On the cover

Photo by Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Lead vocalist of Drowning Pool, Ryan McCombs, performs with the band during a tour for the troops in Kuwait.



# No excuse for complacency

**Command Sgt. Maj.**

**Franklin G. Ashe**

**CFLCC Command Sergeant Major**

As Soldiers, we engage in high-risk activities every day because of the nature of our business. It is one thing to say a Soldier died leading his troops during combat operations or he died while putting the lives of others in front of his own, but when a Soldier is killed because of complacency and a lack of safety it's unacceptable. Accidental deaths, most of the time, are preventable.

By not wearing seatbelts in tactical and non-tactical vehicles, not wearing helmets with the chinstrap fastened, not wearing reflective gear when you're out running and not keeping muzzle awareness on weapons, Soldiers are putting themselves and their buddies in jeopardy. There is no one safety issue out there that is more important than others, but the commonality to all of it is complacency or leadership failures.

Leadership and safety are united and the two cannot be separated. We don't do safety in addition to what we do, it's a part of what we do. Leaders are supposed to accomplish the mission and take care of their Soldiers, but sometimes they get so wrapped up in the mission part, they forget about the safety aspect.

Leaders have to make sure their Soldiers, as well as themselves, are conducting their business in a safe manner. One way to do this is by conducting correct troop leading procedures. We have to be careful about some of our procedures, because if we don't pay attention to exactly what we're doing, we reinforce bad habits.

An example of this is clearing barrels. The majority of negligent discharges occur at clearing barrels. One of the reasons this happens is because no leader is

present, making sure the Soldier is following the steps correctly. Another thing that happens is we're constantly clearing weapons in areas where they shouldn't be loaded anyway. Soldiers become used to clearing a weapon that doesn't have a magazine in it, so they go through the steps without thinking about it.

Safety is also part of force protection. Anytime we keep our Soldiers from getting killed or injured, we're protecting the force. Force protection has two meanings in a combat zone. One part is keeping people healthy and alive by doing things correctly and safely. Even by doing simple things like washing your hands so you don't get sick when you eat or making sure weapons are cleared and on safe, Soldiers have a hand in force protection.

The other part of force protection, of course, is the security measures we take to keep the enemy from getting any type of advantage on us. Information that pertains to operational security, whether it's when our missions are, where our missions are or how we do our operations, needs to be protected, and we can't take that for granted either.

Force protection also includes making sure our host-nation support personnel are wearing a badge where we can see them and they're in the right places with the right escort. We also have to make sure that sensitive information in our work spaces are properly secured and only being accessed by the right people.

The security we have protecting our bases provide force protection also. Security forces make sure the bases aren't breached by any unauthorized personnel, for whatever reason, whether it's to attack us, to steal stuff or to gather information.

Safety and force protection are things we do constantly and they should always be in a leader's

mind as well as in the minds of their troops.

We should be physically comfortable in certain areas but we should never be mentally comfortable in terms of thinking "nothing can happen."

Complacency is like a cancer and it's killing Soldiers. It can be defined as a leadership failure, because it's up to leaders not to allow themselves or their Soldiers to become complacent. Leaders should realize when they think they've talked about safety or pre-checks too much, they've become complacent themselves. You can't place enough emphasis on safety.

Sometimes people think because we're in a combat zone, that makes it okay for them to do things they wouldn't be doing otherwise, and that's not true. This is when it becomes more important to do the right thing. You need to be going through all your proper checklists, making sure people are prepared to execute the mission to the standard and safely. When they see something isn't quite right, leaders have the responsibility to correct it.

One of the concerns people have is "Oh, we have to start at this time" or "Oh, we have to get this done right now." None of it is worth killing or crippling someone else. Even if you check something a thousand times, that's all right. The one time you don't check it is when you have a breakdown. If you think you're losing time by stopping something for a brief period of time to fix it, just think about how much time you're going to lose when that piece of equipment is completely destroyed and the individuals using it are gone for good. It doesn't equal out.

When I hear about Soldiers dying from a preventable accident or because of an act of carelessness, it makes me sick.

We have to ensure our young Soldiers and young leaders don't



**Command Sgt. Maj. Ashe**

get in their head "Hey, I'm not going to get hurt, I've done this before and nothing happened." The next thing you know their mom or dad, husband or wife is getting visited by a casualty assistance officer and chaplain and being told their loved one was killed in a situation that didn't have to happen. We've had too many Soldiers killed in accidents. We don't have to just accept the fact all these Soldiers are dying, but what we can do is honor their memory by doing the right thing. When you see a Soldier doing something unsafe, don't allow it. Make sure they understand how wrong that is and how important safety is through some type of reinforcement.

Everybody is responsible for safety, regardless of their rank or position. In fact, we're obligated to say something and the person who's on the receiving end of that should stop and think about this. That person cares enough to correct you, so don't get angry about it, fix it.

Sometimes we have to go out of our way to stop something that's wrong and fix it. I'd rather be tired of stopping people from doing the wrong thing, than be refreshed and full of energy sitting in the chapel at a memorial service because another Soldier got killed in a needless and senseless accident. Once a Soldier is dead, that's it. There is no second chance.

Be safe.—PATTON'S OWN!

# Different service, same mission

*Army MPs finish tour, hand over law enforcement responsibilities to Navy MAs*

**Spc. Robert Adams**

Assistant Editor

The police car keys are being handed from one service to another as the Navy takes over provost marshal responsibilities from the Army in Kuwait Friday.

The Navy Master of Arms Law and Order Detachment will take over the Area Support Group-Kuwait provost marshal office responsibilities from the 430th Military Police Detachment, Law and Order, which replaced the Air Force in December 2004.

"The mission will be the same and the only differences will be that they have a brassard that says Navy and a shoulder sleeve that says MA," said Maj. Norby Ewing, ASG-Ku deputy provost marshal.

The Army MPs are currently training the Navy MAs on the procedures and processes of running the ASG-K PMO, whose jurisdiction includes all military camps as well as all places servicemembers travel throughout Kuwait.

The Navy personnel are attending mandatory briefings on military justice, patrol training, search and seizure and go through everything from basic patrol stops and security checks to colors detail.

At the end of the month they will have full responsibility of routine traffic patrols, K-9 assets and military police investigator duties.

"The biggest thing for the Navy is to push forward and to adapt to the changing installation environment," said Lt. Col. Neal Flatt, ASG-K provost marshal.

The Navy MA Det. is comprised of Sailors from more than 17 different states from coast to coast.

About one-third have civilian law enforcement experience to include detectives, narcotics traffic officers, New York Police Department and California

Highway Patrol officers, federal immigration and customs enforcement agents, drug enforcement agents and federal and state correctional officers.

"This will allow us to draw from civilian experience to augment our mission here," said Master of Arms Senior Chief Michael Gonzalez, senior enlisted advisor for the MA detachment.

The Navy MAs have learned a lot from the Army MPs, and are eager to take over and start using what they have learned.

"I expect to represent the Navy Corps values: honor, courage and commitment and leave here with a distinction of a job well done," said MA Petty Officer 1st Class Kelly Cruz, Law and Order Detachment squad supervisor. "I expect my junior Sailors to be professional, courteous and responsible and to treat their fellow military counterparts as they would want to be treated under the same circumstances."

"The 430th MP Det. is leaving large shoes to fill," said Ewing, who will be replacing Flatt as the provost marshal when the 430th MP Det. leaves.

Ewing said he wants to continue to improve the PMO during the upcoming year.

"As camps are growing we will have to implement new technology," Ewing said. "We will eventually have vehicle registration on camps and emplace a new system to track installation access and identification."

"I also want to continue to develop the PMO and help it grow as the mission here grows," he added. "The ultimate goal is to have the safest and securest camp as possible."

## Army MPs deserve great deal of gratitude

The 430th MP Det., a Reserve unit headquartered out of Red Bank, N.J., is redeploying after a successful year with no injuries



Spc. Robert Adams

**The Veteran's Day flag call, made up of Army MPs and Navy MAs, fold the colors after retreat. It is traditional for military police around the world to conduct flag call 365 days a year.**

or altercations.

The unit began its mission a year ago as a unit with Soldiers from all around the country.

"A lot of Soldiers were new to the military police corps and jumped right into it," said 1st Lt. Paul Headley, 430th MP Det. commander. "The Soldiers learned to work together to complete this mission."

During its tour, the 430th MP Det. decided it would be beneficial to split the unit in two, keeping half at Arifjan and sending half to Buehring.

"By being closer to the northern camps it cut down on the response time," Flatt said. "The Soldiers took ownership of the camps they were at and took interest in what happened there."

The MPs have responded to everything from dumpster fires and suspicious packages, to evacuating troops from dangerous areas to avoid casualties.

"The camps are always changing so we had to be alert," said Master Sgt. Robert Corniea, 430th MP Det. operations sergeant. "The scenarios that you can run into here can be a mess, so you have to think on your feet."

The MPs went over different scenarios everyday so if something new happened everyone would be prepared for it in the

future.

"Our job entails investigating all crimes and incidents in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice and crimes that American civilians commit under the United States Code," said Staff Sgt. Edwin Mata, 430th MP Det. day shift patrol supervisor.

"We are also entitled to enforce crimes committed in violation of international and Kuwaiti law," he added.

Since the ratio of MPs to troops is 1-to-2,000, whereas civilian police officers are 1-to-500, the 430th MP Det. networked with unit commands to carry out procedures to minimize crime.

"We also got to know project managers of contracting firms and personnel with the Kuwaiti Crime Investigating Division and the Kuwaiti Ministry of the Interior," Mata said.

"People want justice and during our time here we have done that with 100 percent convictions," Corniea said.

The Navy MAs noticed how organized they were the moment they started training with them.

"This is one of the best units I have relieved anywhere," Gonzalez said.

He added, "The day we checked in here they had 'Go Navy' all over the place."



*Spc. Michael R. Noggle*

Staff Sgt. Leonard Phillips, HHC, 46th Eng. Bn., engages his target during a close-quarters range in preparation for his unit's mission in Iraq.

# 46th Eng. Bn. can't be stopped, ready to go

**Spc. Michael R. Noggle**  
CFLCC PAO/11th PAD

Imagine your unit is weeks away from deployment. Your attention and focus is dedicated to training and the mission that lies ahead.

Then disaster strikes nearby, your unit is called upon to provide aid to the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"The Soldiers gave up a lot of training time, family time and prepping mentally because they were tied up with another important mission on the homeland," said Lt. Col. Carol Anderson, 46th Engineer Battalion commander.

The unit, based out of Fort Polk, La., and Fort Rucker, Ala., responded without hesitation as nearby communities were in need of help and rescue.

"When the hurricanes hit, we had to adjust fire," said Sgt. Corey Baker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 46th Eng. Bn. "People needed our help and our focus became the homefront."

Without water, electricity and communication lines, people flocked to Polk anticipating those needs would be fulfilled.

"We supplied water and some emergency power ... as well as helping the post with transportation of people, ice distribution and setting up evacuee housing area," said Maj.

Darren Payne, 46th Eng. Bn. operations officer. "We executed several missions out in the local community providing assistance to a local hospital and electrical and water assistance to a nearby nursing home."

Payne also pointed out that some Soldiers went anywhere from five days to three weeks without power or running water.

A number of people from the unit were taking in their relatives from New Orleans, Mississippi and Alabama, he said.

"That really had an impact on our training in preparation to come over here, from a mental standpoint," Payne added.

The unit had more than half of the equipment loaded on to the ship at the ports, however with Katrina approaching, all loading operations were ceased and the ship was sent to sea.

"Despite that and all the other drama, we got the ship loaded and went back to focusing on the mission," Payne said.

As for the mission ahead, the unit will continue helping those in need but in a hostile environment.

The battalion will conduct its horizontal and vertical construction missions and have formed a tactical movement team to provide convoy security, Anderson said.

The horizontal engineers are in charge of road repair work and route reconnaissance for any possible threat for an oncoming convoy.

The vertical team will work mainly on the forwarding operating bases, constructing billets, quality offices and an efficient area of operation for U.S. Forces.

"Our work on the FOB ... will give a better quality of life and level of comfort to the Soldiers working in Iraq," he said. "We also want to provide the Iraqi forces with the bases they can operate securely from and extend their reach into other parts of the country to have a permanent presence."

"The tactical movement teams are our best Soldiers to provide security and get supplies from point A to point B," Anderson said. "It's not far-fetched when you remind yourself engineering is the secondary mission to being Infantry."

Anderson said it will be difficult losing some of her finest general construction assets in support of the movement teams but remains optimistic the unit will carry out the mission it is required to do.

"I always tell my Soldiers to do the unexpected," Anderson said. "America expects us to come over here and do our jobs. Doing the unexpected means doing that little extra to make your own mark in life."

She posed the question, "What are you going to do different and how are you going to make a difference?"

Some from Louisiana and Alabama already have answers.



# Drowning Pool shows

**Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw**

**CFLCC PAO/11th PAD**

The group jumped around and Soldiers were lifted on shoulders and passed through the crowd taking photographs from their vantage point.

The band continued to belt out rough energetic music with a passion embraced by the crowd.

Drowning Pool, a Dallas-based rock/metal band, visited and performed for troops at Camps Virginia, Buehring and Arifjan Nov. 1 - 3.

The band is most famous for its single "Bodies" which was performed at the end of every show as the crowd chanted its title in anticipation.

"They put on an awesome show," said Spc. Matt Marcott, Morale Welfare and Recreation representative. "They had lots of energy. The show was just as intense on the last night as on the first."

They visited as part of a United Service Organizations tour in partnership with Armed Forces Entertainment, accompanied by Dallas afternoon radio station disc jockey Jessie Jessup from KDGE's "The Edge."

While the band performed, Jessup interviewed servicemembers and hosted her radio program during the tour.

Drummer Mike Luce said the band was fortunate to be performing for the troops because they weren't originally slated for the tour.

"There was another band set up to do it – whether they couldn't make it or didn't want to I'm not sure, but it worked out in our favor," Luce shrugged.

"About the time we made the radio announcement of Ryan joining the band was when the other band said they couldn't do it. We were like, 'Yeah, we're on,'" he gushed as excitement spread through his face.

The band members said they were thrilled when D.J. Jessie asked them to join her.

"We were hoping to do something like this so we kind of put the word out that we support the troops," Guitarist C.J. Pierce said. "We're too old and out of shape to join, so we decided to play music for them."

The group said the timing was a little off but they were excited to come.

"The first time we heard about it, it was supposed to be around Christmas so we said, 'Okay.' For all the times we get to sit around in America and make up music and are

afforded the luxuries that we have, this will be our Christmas present back," Luce said. "We just happened to come a little bit earlier."

The troops said they felt just as elated.

"I was really excited to see a well-known alternative rock/heavy metal band," Marcott said. "I was surprised and happy to see them come."

The band joked that it felt slightly intimidated playing in front of the troops, but otherwise it was just an everyday rock show without the alcohol.

"We're sober and they're sober – usually at a rock show everybody has a few drinks but by the end of the show it's just like any normal show. Everyone loosens up and has a good time – everyone feels it and it gets their minds off what's happening," Pierce said.

The band said it had a great time on the tour. Luce and new lead vocalist Ryan McCombs said they liked receiving patches from the troops and they all enjoyed hearing the servicemembers' stories.

"Ryan and I have been having a competition to see who can collect the most patches," Luce said while giving McCombs a challenging look. "When the Soldiers first started giving them to us we were afraid they'd get in trouble."

They also said they saw more of the positive aspects of the mission.

"I've learned about the assistance the country of Kuwait has given, just little things like that," McCombs said. "I've been hearing more of a reality that you don't necessarily get on the news. All my knowledge came from what I've seen on TV, coming into Kuwait I found out it wasn't such a bad place."

"The media likes to play up the train wrecks so you can't look away," Luce added. "You won't hear about the good things or the positive efforts made through all of this."

The band said it would like to tour for the troops every six months to a year. They said the USO really made its stay a success.

"The USO made things a lot easier. We thought we'd have more problems – the flight, the hotel, the travel to the bases – everything has been so breezy," Pierce said. "I expected it to be more of a hassle."

At all three shows McCombs told the troops this was the band's best tour.

"It's because of you all that we can

sit at home and write this music," he said into the microphone before singing the lyrics of the next song to the frenzied crowd. "You give us the freedoms and liberties we enjoy."

*Photos by Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw*

**Guitarist C.J. Pierce of the rock/metal band Drowning Pool gets into a song while touring in Kuwait for the troops. The group played at Camps Virginia, Buehring and Arifjan.**





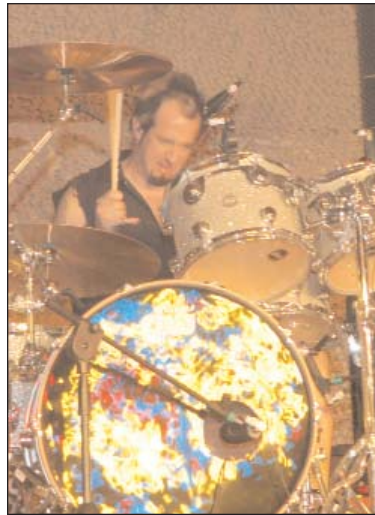
# s true colors in Kuwait



Drowning Pool lead vocalist Ryan McCombs belts out lyrics of a song during a show on the band's tour for troops in Kuwait.



(Above) Bassist Stevie Benton signs a shirt for a servicemember at Camp Arifjan during Drowning Pool's tour for the troops in Kuwait. The band signed autographs for troops at three camps until 2 a.m. after each of its three shows.



(Left) Drummer Mike Luce beats his drums during the show at Camp Arifjan. The band was fortunate to tour for the troops because another band had been slated. The group toured Camps Virginia, Buehring and Arifjan with Dallas radio station disc jockey Jessie Jessup. Jessup interviewed the group and servicemembers for her show.



DJ Jessie interviews the members of Drowning Pool.

## Force Extraction Team help in outgoing process

# Australian doctors screen soldiers

**Spc. Janine Coogler**  
CFLCC PAO/11th PAD

Operations in the Middle East are maintained by the effective force of troops throughout theater. No matter the job, all U.S. and Coalition Forces perform a specific function that contributes to the stabilization and rehabilitation of Iraq.

As part of an Australian Force Extraction Team, a medical team of three, came to the Middle East to identify Australian soldiers with any diseases or illnesses and diagnose and tag for further treatment, said Australian Maj. Mark Slatyer, senior medical officer.

Although the medical team conducts screening of Australian soldiers headed home from deployment, it relies on assistance from U.S. troop medical clinics.

In order to maintain a strong force, the welfare and health of troops must be up to standard, said Australian Capt. Gavin Jones, general duty medical officer.

"If we identify someone that needs treatment, we send them to the local TMC, but if the person's condition is more serious then they are taken through the American medical support channels."

During the screening all soldiers are given a post-deployment Middle East information medical-awareness card. The cards help physicians in Australia become aware of the diseases soldiers may have been exposed to and are not commonly found in Australia.

The medical screening is based on questions to soldiers about their deployment to pinpoint what disease or hazards to which they were readily exposed.

In addition to the screening the doctors conduct a routine physical.

"This helps the soldiers when they go home," Jones said. "They don't have to wait around in Australia for check-ups. They can quickly go on leave and see their families."

To expedite the redeployment process, the Force Extraction Team came to the Middle East, instead of having the soldiers complete the process in Australia.

Soldiers go through the process of turning in equipment, seeing a psychiatrist, going through customs, medical screening and the long-awaited home-going briefing.

The key to the screening is catching soldiers with problems and providing them with treatment in addition to making them aware to what they might have been exposed to, Slatyer said.

"This way it lessens the chance of soldiers turning up with problems months after they return home," he said.

The Australian military is quite small when compared to the U.S. military. To maintain its small force, Australian military takes preventative steps like the U.S. military to maintain healthy soldiers, Jones said. "An ounce of prevention is better than a ton of cure."

Jones said the soldiers came here healthy and they need to return in the same condition.

### *Did you know ...?*

- ♦ Australia is the sixth largest nation after Russia, Canada, China, the United States of America and Brazil.
- ♦ Australia has a population of more than 20 million.
- ♦ Australia is the only nation to govern an entire continent and its outlying islands.
- ♦ Australia's mainland is the largest island and the smallest, flattest continent on Earth. It lies between 10° and 39° South latitude.
- ♦ Immigration is an important feature of Australian society. Since 1945, over six million people from 200 countries have come to Australia as new settlers.

*Fact from [www.about-australia.com](http://www.about-australia.com)*

## Japanese 7th Support Group heads home

*Spc. Janine Coogler*

In a home-going ceremony at the APOD, the Japanese Defense Attaché Col. Keisuke Kawae, Japanese Assistant Defense Attaché Lt. Col. Takahiro Shimizu and the Japanese support group salute soldiers from the 7th Support Group Nov. 5 as they board their flight home.





# Third U.S. Army celebrates heritage

**Capt. Chevelle Thomas**  
CFLCC PAO/11th PAD Commander

The Third U.S. Army celebrated its 87th birthday Nov. 7 with a cake-cutting ceremony on the command operations information center floor.

The Soldiers of Third U.S. Army continue the proud tradition and distinguished heritage set by its predecessors. Third Army stands watch to deter hostile and contentious governments which would disrupt peace and stability, assuring Coalition Partners of its national resolve to end conflict whenever called upon to do so.

Many of the servicemembers had great sentiments during this time of celebration about their mission within the organization and their role in the War on Terror.

"I feel that without the Third U.S. Army mission for logistics there would not be forward bases of operations, because we support the fight. I schedule all the video teleconferences, which is one component of communication assets for Third U.S. Army. This enables them to coordinate many of the war efforts for this theater," said Sgt. 1st Class Gilbert Alviso, Coalition Forces Land Component Command VTC chief for C-6.

Third U.S. Army has a proud and long-standing history stemming from Gen. George S. Patton's accomplishments during World War II. It is the same Army that orchestrated the largest modern land battle in history, defeating the Iraqi forces during Operation Desert Storm.

"Our history is replete with the selfless



*Spc. Debralee P. Crankshaw*

**Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third U.S. Army commanding general cuts a cake in celebration of the unit's birthday.**

sacrifices of our Soldiers and today, our team is rounded out by Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, our Soldiers in Slacks and our Coalition allies... You men and women of today carry on the traditions of those Third Army troopers who came before us... You serve well and, by doing so, you ensure our nation's freedom," said Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third U.S. Army/U.S. Army Forces Central Command/Coalition Forces Land Component commanding general.

When Third U.S. Army responded to the Sept. 11 attacks, it was with great commitment and resolve to root out and punish terrorists and those who harbor, facilitate and finance them.

With the support and command and control of Third U.S. Army and CFLCC, military servicemembers have driven insurgents from power, captured hundreds of detainees, created conditions that allowed schools and hospitals to reopen and facilitate airdrops for mil-

lions of humanitarian food rations into Afghanistan and Iraq.

"It is to the greater good of building up the countries here. We have always done that. We helped to free the Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwaiti people, through different liberation campaigns," said Lt. Col. Stacie "Lee" Trueheart, Gulf Region division liaison to CFLCC C-7. "The U.S. has always gone back and helped to rebuild nations after a conflict."

She added, "Third U.S. Army has one of the greatest responsibilities in the restoration of these countries and that is one of the greatest feelings, to know that you were a part of that cause and the team that made it happen."

Many troops even relate the birthday to overall career aspects in the Army.

"I think what we have done here has had a huge impact on Army Reserve Soldiers as far as promotions, ability to transfer from the Individual Ready Reserve to troop program units, which also ties into a Soldier's ability to reenlist for bonuses. I also feel that our mission has had a great impact from the administrative perspective," said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick J. Anderson, U.S. Army Reserve G-1 LNO for the Army Reserve Affairs.

"The Third Army history ... it will remind you that ours is hard work, sometimes nasty, sometimes dangerous, often lonely, but always a noble calling because through your efforts, your sacrifices, your dedication to duty, you are ensuring freedom for America and providing opportunities for freedom for others — Happy Birthday troops," Whitcomb said.

## Happy Birthday Corps

# Marines celebrate 230 years of history

**Spc. Michael R. Noggle**  
CFLCC PAO/11th PAD

The saying "Once a Marine, always a Marine" was apparent as present and former Marines on Camp Arifjan joined together to celebrate the Marine Corps' 230th birthday Nov. 10.

The senior Marine present for the traditional cake-cutting ceremony was Col. Edward Smith, Marine Forces Command Central Kuwait, accompanied by guest of honor, Maj. Gen. James Kelly, Third U.S. Army/U.S. Army

Forces Central Command/Coalition Forces Land Component deputy commanding general.

The cake was cut with the Ka-Bar, the Marine Corps' fighting knife, to signify a band of warriors committed to carrying arms so that the nation may live in peace.

As part of the honored tradition, the youngest and eldest Marine from the camp, Lance Cpl. Venancio Rodriguez and Lt. Col. Martin W. Holdeman, were acknowledged in front of their

fellow Marines.

"It was something nice to have and give recognition to the Marine birthday."

"These are things Marines don't forget," said Dewayne Coleman, a Marine veteran since 1992.

Coleman was one of a handful of civilians who once spent time in the corps.

"Once you're a Marine, you're a Marine for life," he said.

"You always know that you're part of the family," he added.

In a letter addressing to all

Marines on their birthday, Gen. Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, had this to say:

"This past year has been one of the most continuous combat operations overseas and distinguished service here at home, a year of challenges that have brought out the very best in our Corps."

Hagee wrote, "In commemorating our anniversary, let us strengthen our ties to the past by paying homage to those who have gone before us.

# Tests Soldier's mind, body, spirit

**Capt. Chevelle Thomas**

CFLCC PAO/11th PAD Commander

Finishing in 11:03, one Soldier's goal of completing his very first 50-mile ultra marathon was completed Oct.

15.

Unlike most Soldiers who use their rest and relaxation time to take a break from the rigors of work, Lt. Col. J. Matthew Lissner, Coalition Forces Land Component Command, Army Reserve Affairs deputy assistant chief of staff, chose to push his body to the limits along the Blue Ridge Mountains in Lynchburg, Va., at the 23rd Annual Mountain Masochist Trail Run.

After several months of training in Kuwait on the treadmill and in the hot desert sun, running an average of 60 miles a week,



Capt. Chevelle Thomas

**Lt. Col. J. Matthew Lissner runs on a treadmill training for a 50-mile ultra marathon. He ran this marathon while he was on R&R in Virginia.**

Lissner said he felt he was prepared for what lay before him.

When he arrived at the starting point of the race, he found himself in the midst of a crowd of approximately 300 people.

He felt himself

getting pushed along "To see that store and the finish line from a half a mile away, that was an emotional charge ..."

As the sun started

to rise, the paved road slowly began to turn into a smaller trail and that turned into an even smaller trail that eventually put the pack of runners into one long snake-like ranger file, said the Newport News, Va., native.

There were aid stations along the way at about every third mile. Each aid station was named after one of the many terrain features that surrounded the race, like Cashaw Creek, Appalachian Trail, Mount Pleasant and Porter's Ridge.

Some had fruits, cookies, chocolate, potatoes, ham and cheese sandwiches, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and some even had music like *Chariots of Fire*, Lissner said. He went on to say that if it was a big intersection then you might even find yourself being cheered on by 30 to 40 people.

Lissner took advantage of every aid station, stopping for two to three minutes to rehydrate, take in a snack for energy or just show the volunteers that he appreciated what they were doing for him and the other runners during the race.

Lissner found himself facing severe challenges mid-way through the race due to the difficult terrain that he had to maneuver and the severity of the cramps he was experiencing.

Between the 30- and 40-mile markers, he said he realized that this was one of the most mentally challenging things he had ever done.

He said he thought about his Ranger training and how people would get delirious and compared that to the challenges he faced in the marathon.

However, he knew he had to keep going.

"There were times where ... I'm like, 'Why am I doing this?'" the 48-year-old said.

As he continued to talk about his race experience at the MMTR, which is a part of the Lynchburg Ultra Series and also is considered the Montrail Ultra Cup Championship race, he knew that the race was a gut-check.

The race was more than just a competition to Lissner. It was not about rivalry between him and the other participants. It was not about winning.

In the end it was about self-determination and will power. It was mind over matter or, in this case, mind over pain.

Lt. Col. J. Mathew Lissner As he ran the ultra he continuously asked himself, "Who am I going to disappoint? What am I going to tell my kids?"

He would tell himself, "It will quit hurting as soon as I get to the finish."

With that in mind Lissner said when he did get cramps he would not push himself so hard to where he acquired an injury. Little old ladies and old guys would pass him, but he was not trying to compete with anybody. He looked at the watch and didn't want to get hurt, which would cause him to get pulled from the course.

It was basically Lissner, nature and the watch. His physical and mental stamina to continue the race, his ability to adapt to the weather and his drive to meet the 12-hour time requirements were the challenges that he had accepted for himself and determined to meet.

As the last aid station was passed, heading for the finish, Lissner told himself, "I'm close."

He said as he got closer to the finish line the thought of relaxing and having a beer crossed his mind. He could see the country store on one side of the road and the finish line on the other side, and he said that was a really great sight.

"To see that store and the finish line from a half a mile away, that was an emotional charge, but it wasn't like this great big adrenaline rush where I started sprinting for the finish either," he said.

"I just kept on trucking along, nice and easy," he said.

After finishing, Lissner said if he had it to do over again the only thing he would do different is run with an iPod because he felt that would have moved some of the miles away a little easier.

However, in the end he did not need an iPod. All he needed was the self-discipline to keep going.

Even today some troops ask Lissner why he did the race and his reply is, "It seemed like a pretty good idea at the time."



# Community

happenings for Nov. 16 through Nov. 23

## Arifjan

### Wednesday

Pool tournament, 8-ball, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Flag football league preseason, Zone 1 soccer field

Tae Bo class, 4:30 p.m., Zone 1 tennis courts

Boxing class, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

Step and abs, 8 a.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

### Thursday

Flag football league preseason, Zone 1 soccer field

Ballroom dancing, 8 p.m., Zone 1

Community Center

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1

Community Center

Tai Chi, 4 p.m., 8 p.m., Zone 1 Fitness Center

### Friday

Flag football league preseason, Zone 1 soccer field

Boxing class, 8 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Total Praise Concert, 7 p.m., Zone 6 PCB

1251

### Saturday

Flag football league, through Dec. 24, Zone 1 soccer field

Salsa lessons, beginner, 6 p.m., intermediate, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center room 102

Boxing class, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 food court

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

Hip Hop step, 1 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Tai Chi advanced, 4 p.m., 8 p.m., Zone 1

Fitness Center

The Ride, 6 p.m., Zone 1 Fitness Center

### Sunday

NFL games, 6 p.m., Zone 1 and 6

Community Centers

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

Step and abs, 5 a.m., 1 p.m., Zone 1

Fitness Center

Abs, 8 a.m., Zone 1 Fitness Center

### Monday

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Thanksgiving Wheel of Fortune, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Community Center

Salsa lessons, beginner, 6 p.m., intermediate, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center room 102

Tae Bo class, 4:30 p.m., Zone 1 tennis courts

### Tuesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Aaron Tippin Show, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

Ballroom dancing, 8 p.m., Zone 1

Community Center

### Wednesday

Tree trimming, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Thanksgiving over 40 and women's basketball tournament, through Nov. 27

Tae Bo class, 4:30 p.m., Zone 1 tennis courts

Boxing class, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

**For more information call**

**430-1205/1302**

## Buehring

### Thursday

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

### Friday

Talent Show, 7 p.m., MWR stage

Hip-Hop Night, 9 p.m., Tent 1

### Saturday

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Hip-Hop Night, 9 p.m., MWR tent 1

### Sunday

Salsa dance, 9 p.m.

### Monday

Turkey Trot 5K run, registration 5 a.m., start 6 a.m.

### Tuesday

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

**For more information call**

**828-1340**

## Kuwait Naval Base

### Wednesday

Checkers, 7 p.m., Aerobics room

### Friday

Bingo, 7 p.m., Fitness Center bench area

### Saturday

Foosball, 1 p.m., game room

### Wednesday

Chess, 7 p.m., Aerobics room

**For more information call**

**839-1063**

## Navistar

### Wednesday

Foosball tournament, 8 a.m., MWR tent

### Thursday

Foosball tournament, 8 a.m., MWR tent

### Friday

Foosball tournament, 8 a.m., MWR tent

### Saturday

Fun run, 6 a.m., MWR tent

### Monday

Pool tournament, 9-ball, 8 a.m., MWR tent

### Tuesday

Pool tournament, 9-ball, 8 a.m., MWR tent

### Wednesday

Pool tournament, 9-ball, 8 a.m., MWR tent

**For more information call**

**844-1137**

## Spearhead/SPOD

**For information call 825-1302**

## Victory

### Wednesday

Bricklayer's free-throw contest, 3 p.m.,

MWR courts

Three-point contest, 4 p.m., MWR courts

### Thursday

Aerobics, 5 a.m., MWR

Guns of steel chin-up contest, 3 p.m., gym

Movie night, 6 p.m., MWR dayroom

### Friday

Furious flag football tournament, 3 p.m.,

MWR fields

### Saturday

Aerobics, 5 a.m., MWR

Furious flag football tournament, 3 p.m.,

MWR fields

### Sunday

Furious flag football tournament, 3 p.m.,

MWR fields

### Monday

Coolhand Luke Texas Hold'em tournament, 6 p.m., MWR dayroom

### Tuesday

Aerobics, 5 a.m., MWR

Desert Bingo Night, 6 p.m., MFT

### Wednesday

Whose Your Baghdaddy Arm Wrestling

championship, 3 p.m., MWR dayroom

**For more information call**

**823-1033**

## Virginia

### Wednesday

Volleyball tournament, 10 vs. 10, 5 p.m.,

Field S of MWR tent

### Thursday

Volleyball tournament, 10 vs. 10, 5 p.m.,

Field S of MWR tent

### Friday

Push-up, sit-up competition, 4 p.m., gym

### Saturday

Hip-Hop Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

### Monday

Basketball tournament, 5 vs. 5, 6 p.m., basketball courts

### Tuesday

Bingo, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

### Wednesday

Chess tournament, 7 p.m., MWR tent

**For more information call**

**832-1045**



# The sprint to victory

For the Veteran's Day track and field story see the Nov. 23 edition of the *Desert Voice*.